



South Florida Water Management District

WRAC MEETING AGENDA ADDENDUM

April 2, 2009

**Supporting documents for the following item have been added:
Item #:3**

See supporting document: [Fin Rpt WRAC 4 2 09 dberg.pdf](#)

At the March strategic planning presentation in Clewiston, staff presented an update on financial conditions and revenue estimates:

- We continue to try to forecast revenues
- in a very uncertain environment:
 - Stock market very volatile, dropping 49% since January 2008
 - National unemployment has risen from 4.9% in 12/07 to 8.1% in 2/09
 - Construction activity at all-time lows as measured by annual housing starts and annual building permits
 - Record levels of foreclosures
- Update on state budget:
 - Governor's draft budget included funding for Save Our Everglades (\$75M), FL Forever (\$31.5M), AWS (\$10M), WMLTF (\$9.9M)
 - Recent House and Senate "offers" that will be part of April briefing include only enough WMLTF to cover land acquisition bond debt service
- March Office of Economic and Demographic Research Tax Roll Estimates:
 - Statewide 12.9% reduction in tax roll for FY10 and 7.6% reduction for FY11
 - For SFWMD counties, 15% reduction in ad valorem for FY10 (\$80M) and 7.5% reduction for FY11 (\$34M)
- Potential reduction and redirection of \$97M to accommodate revenue reduction and funding redirection for land management (due to loss of WMLTF State \$) and to match AWS in Gov's budget
- Staff still doing analysis of one-time cash balances with a focus on funding completion of projects
- Staff preparing to kick off its FY10 budget development process with a focus on:
 - Reviewing requests based on statutory requirements
 - Evaluate impacts of reductions from FY09 levels
 - Look for opportunities to internalize currently contracted work
 - And reduce or eliminate lower priority activities

**Supporting documents for the following item have been added:
Item #:4**

See supporting document: [ROG_Pres_Rev_Trms_WRAC040209.pdf](#)

See supporting document: [ROG_PLANNING_WRAC040209_final.pdf](#)

Reviving

THE river OF grass

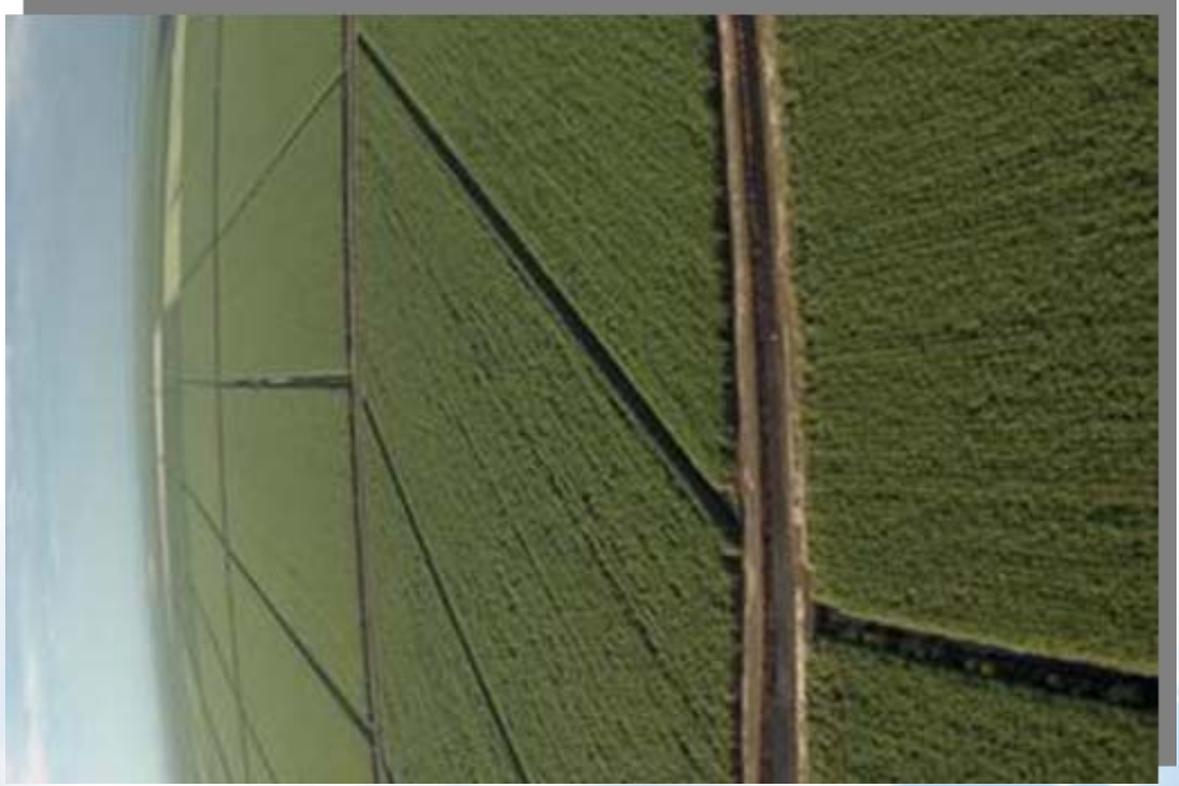


River of Grass Acquisition Update

Water Resources Advisory Commission

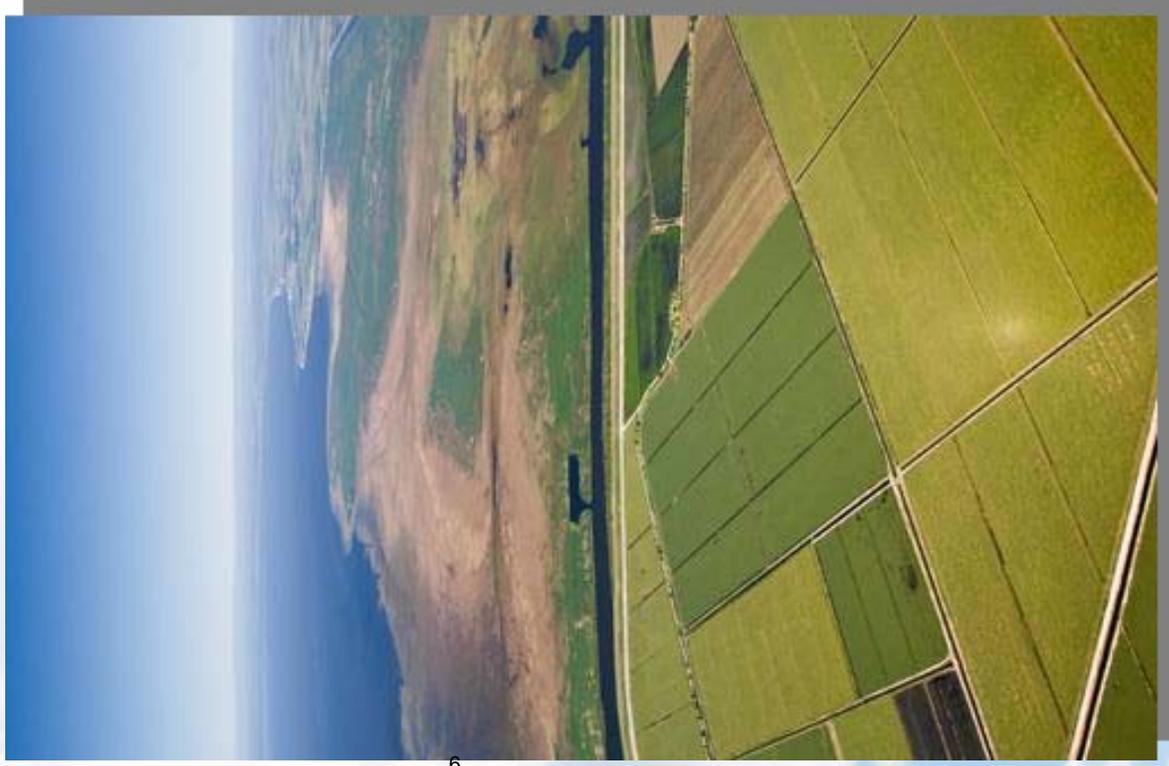
April 2, 2009

Everglades Land Acquisition Revised Framework for Acquisition



- **April 1, 2009:** Governor Crist announced proposal to revise framework for acquiring land owned by United States Sugar Corporation for Everglades restoration
- **Proposed Revised Terms:** Preserve District's ability to purchase 180,000 acres but in affordable increments

Everglades Land Acquisition Proposed Terms

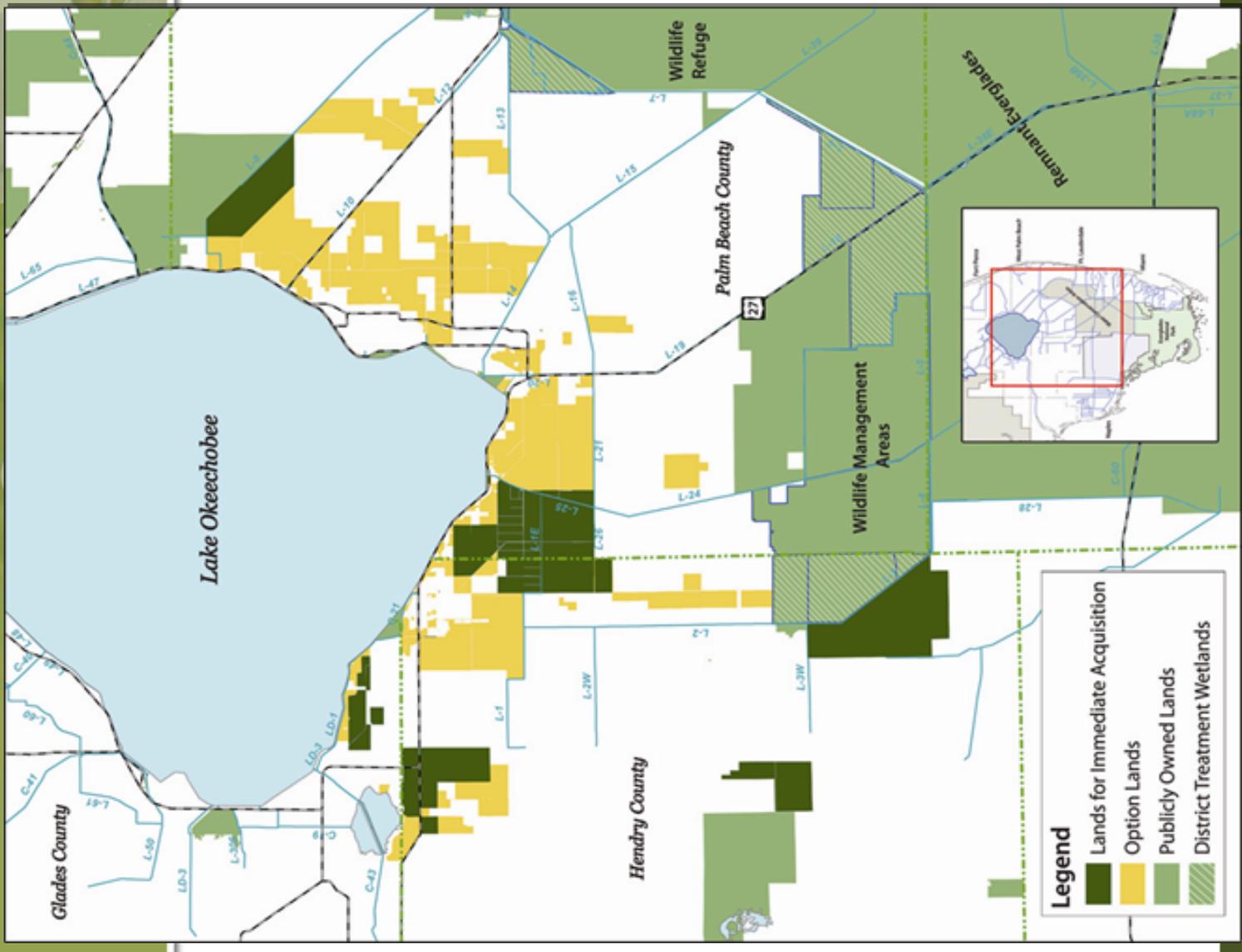


- Amend existing purchase and sale contract and lease agreement
- Initial purchase of approx. 72,500 acres for \$533 million
- Option to acquire remaining 107,500 acres within first ten years
- Proposed revised terms subject to review and approval by SFWMD and U.S. Sugar Boards

Acquisition Lands

- **72,500 acres for initial acquisition:**
 - 32,000 acres of citrus
 - 40,500 acres of sugarcane
- **County breakdown*:**
 - Palm Beach ~ 26,000 acres
 - Glades ~ 3,500 acres
 - Hendry ~ 43,000 acres

*Approximate acreage only; includes 3,000 acres for conveyance to municipalities



Everglades Land Acquisition Proposed Lease Terms

- U.S. Sugar to lease 40,500 acres of sugarcane land at \$150/acre for 7 years
- If option on remaining 107,500 acres is not exercised by year 7, U.S. Sugar lease extends additional 3 years at \$150/acre
- If SFWMD elects not to proceed with acquisition of remaining lands at year 10, U.S. Sugar lease extends additional 10 years at market rate
- If SFWMD proceeds with acquiring remaining land, any property not required for immediate construction is leased to U.S. Sugar at market rate through year 20

Everglades Land Acquisition Proposed Terms

- During 10 year period, U.S. Sugar has the right to sell and SFWMD has right of first refusal on ~107,500 acres
- Area between US 27 and Miami Canal has 3 year freeze on U.S. Sugar's ability to sell or accept third party offers
- After 3 year period, right of first refusal applies

Everglades Land Acquisition “Take Down” Schedule

- 32,000 citrus acres available for District’s use with one year’s notice
- First 10 years – up to 45,000 acres - 62% of acquired land
 - 32,000 citrus acres
 - 10,000 cane acres
 - 3,000 acres for conveyance to municipalities
- Second 10 years – (if SFWMD elects not to proceed with remaining land acquisition)
 - Additional 10,000 acres - 75% of acquired land

Everglades Land Acquisition Benefits of Proposed Terms

- Reduces immediate investment by 60% - \$800M
- Reduces annual debt service by 60% - \$65M/year
- Triples lease rate to generate minimum of \$40M in revenue and avoid \$11M in land management costs during first 7 years
- Potentially frees up revenue in future years for restoration projects
- Sustains regional agriculture and jobs with continued operation of the U.S. Sugar facilities
- Minimizes the District's financial risk
- Applies strengthened BMPs to 72,500 acres

Reviving

THE *river* OF GRASS



Questions?

Reviving

THE *river of grass*



River of Grass Phase I Planning

Water Resources Advisory Commission
April 2, 2009

sfwmd.gov/riverofgrass

River of Grass Planning – Activities to Date

- Public planning process – WRAC Issues Workshops
 - January 22 – Clewiston (summarized 2/5)
 - February 3 – West Palm Beach (summarized 2/5)
 - February 19 – Belle Glade (summarized 3/5)
 - March 4 – West Palm Beach (summarized 3/5)
 - March 20 - (summarized today)
 - March 31/April 1 - (summarized today)

March 20 Workshop

- Meeting held at UF/IFAS Hendry County Ext. Office, Dallas B Townsend Agricultural Center in LaBelle
- Local Government Presentations
 - Pahokee
 - Belle Glade
 - South Bay
 - Glades County/Moore Haven
 - Hendry County/Clewiston

March 20 Workshop

Team Configuration Exercise and Related Configuration Information

- Team Configuration Exercise-Instructions
- Water Quality Modeling Overview
- Potential Project Impacts to Sugar Production Economics
- Cost Estimating Approach and Cost Relationships
- Hydrologic Modeling Performance Summary Maps

March 31/April 1 Workshop

- Meeting held at Royal Palm Beach Cultural Center in Royal Palm Beach
- Local Government Presentations
 - Port of Palm Beach
- Continuation of Configuration Information
 - Maps and Land Information
 - Hydrologic Modeling Performance Summary Maps
 - Considerations for Developing a Proposed Configuration
 - Instruction Overview

March 31/April 1 Workshop



- Group Configuration Exercise
- Team Presentations of Proposed Configurations
 - 9 Proposed Team Configurations
- Group Discussion/Q&A

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT



Reviving

THE river OF grass



Next Meeting/Future Meeting Topics

sfwmd.gov/riverofgrass

Next Meeting- Date and Location

Next WRAC Issues Workshop

April 16-17, 2009

SFWMD

Lower West Coast Service Center

2301 MacGregor Blvd

Ft. Myers, FL

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Topics

Initial Discussions Re: Team Configuration Evaluations

Phase I Planning Process - Schedule

February	Problems, Objectives, and Constraints; Approaches to Achieve Goals and Objectives; Stakeholder Presentations
March/April	Modeling/Assessment Tools; Stakeholder Presentations; Configuration Scenarios- Development and Assessment
May	Identify Viable Configurations; Develop Preliminary Cost Estimates
June	Present Draft Viable Configurations and Preliminary Cost Estimates to Governing Board
July	Refine Information Based on Governing Board Input
August	Present Final Draft of Viable Configurations and Preliminary Cost Estimates to Governing Board
September	Governing Board Decision on Land Acquisition Closing

Phase I Planning

www.sfwmd.gov/riverofgrass

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

sfwmd.gov

Search | Site Map | Help | Who to Contact | Español

Reviving

THE RIVER OF GRASS

» back to [Reviving the River of Grass](#) home page

Restoration Project Planning

On December 16, 2008, the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board voted to accept a contract with the United States Sugar Corporation to acquire more than 180,000 acres of agricultural land for Everglades restoration. This historic transaction provides water managers with the unprecedented opportunity to store and treat water on a scale never before envisioned for the benefit of America's Everglades, Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and estuaries.

With full public involvement, the first phase of *River of Grass* restoration project planning is under way. Through a series of [Water Resources Advisory Commission Issues Workshops](#), the Phase 1 planning process will determine viable configurations for constructing a managed system of water storage and treatment to support ecosystem restoration efforts.

Home
About SFWMD
Governing Board
Regional Service Centers
News, Events & Meetings
What We Do
Water Conservation
Water Restrictions
Procurement & Contracts
Career Opportunities
Recreation
Education & Publications
Technical Data & Docs
Emergency Management
Weather
Water Conditions
FAQs
Contact Us
Site Info
» Northern Everglades
» Kissimmee
» Lake Okeechobee
» Everglades
» Coastal Areas

RELATED MATERIALS

- » [Public Workshops: Dates, Agendas, Presentations, Minutes](#)
- » [News, Fact Sheets, Public Information](#)
- » [Reservoir Sizing and Operations Screening \(RESOPS\) Model](#)

Reviving

THE river OF grass



Questions?

sfwmd.gov/riverofgrass

RESTORATION PLANNING

**Supporting documents for the following item have been added:
Item #:6**

See supporting document: [Lk O Com Rpt 3 25 09.pdf](#)

**SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (SFWMD)
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION (WRAC)
LAKE OKEECHOBEE COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, March 25, 2009, SFWMD Martin/St. Lucie Service Center
780 SE Indian Street, Stuart, FL 9:00 a.m.**

MEETING SUMMARY

AGENDA ITEMS:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Member Issues
- Water Conditions Summary
- Northern Everglades Plan and River Watershed Protection Plan Updates
- Water Quality Treatment Technologies and Lake Ecology Update
- Lake Okeechobee Controlled Burning Plan
- Dispersed Storage and Treatment Update
- Martin County Stormwater and other Restoration Projects

ACTIONS:

1. **Without objection, the Committee recommended acceptance and implementation of the Lake Okeechobee Burn Plan presented by SFWMD Staff, as Phase I; and, that after evaluating Phase I implementation results, staff prepare Phase II to encompass the entire lake with a “stairstep” approach for implementation.**
2. **Without objection, the Committee recommended that WRAC and the SFWMD Governing Board endorse expedited implementation of cost effective alternative water storage programs, dispersed water storage; and, other programs such as: The Florida Ranchlands Environmental Services projects; and, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Wetland Reserve Enhancement and Wetlands Reserve, programs as long as funding is available.**

FUTURE PRESENTATIONS:

- Comprehensive update on Ten Mile Creek Reservoir – USACE

STAFF FOLLOW UP:

- Send link to New York Times travel section article on Lake Okeechobee
- Send links to Department of Environmental Protection’s Best Management Practices and Statewide Nutrient Criteria.

Item 1: Welcome: Ms. Melissa Meeker, Chair, WRAC Lake Okeechobee Committee: Ms. Meeker welcomed everyone and introduced Ms. Tina Bond, alternate for Richard Earp, Osceola County; Ms. Susan Kaynor, USACE, alternate for Kimberly Taplin; and Mr. Roy Ferrara, Seminole Tribe, alternate for Mr. Jack Smith. She asked all others to introduce themselves.

Item 2: Member Issues:

- United Waterfowlers representative indicated the Urban Turf Fertilizer bill has been successfully attached to another bill. According to the UWF, this bill should help prevent thousands of tons of phosphorous from entering our waterways.
- Lee County has requested (copies of letter handed out) that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continue base flow releases to the Caloosahatchee River from Lake Okeechobee. The letters, including one from Audubon of Florida, state that the March 12 decision by the SFWMD Governing Board to request cessation of the releases was based on incomplete information and inadequate public discussion. Lee County requested formal support from the committee.
- Audubon of Florida, Martin County and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) representatives agreed with Lee County and said seagrasses would not survive long without some freshwater. Concern: USACE not listening and is taking too long to act.
- Florida Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative, Lake Okeechobee Small Business Owners, and Florida Farm Bureau representatives disagreed and said farmers have significant continuing water supply shortages and have lost \$100 million in crops over the last two years. Lake Okeechobee is in good shape – loss of water from the lake now could set back recovery progress, cause lack of access because of very low water and hurt businesses. Tropical Storm Fay and recent rains have helped some, but the problem is with Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule, 2008 – keeping the lake very low has resulted in insufficient water for the Caloosahatchee, agriculture and recreation.
- SFWMD Governing Board agenda notice and discussion at 3/12/09 Board meeting were of concern. Lee County comment that they did not know staff would recommend cessation.
- Chair: This discussion indicates the difficulty of this issue and the decision made by the Board. Minutes of the February meeting show intent of the Governing Board was to stop the releases if needed.
- Note: went to Item 3, below. Then continued Member Issues:
- Port Pahokee is a \$20 million marina with no boats due to low water levels. Need to capture coastal stormwater runoff and conserve water discharged to tide during high rainfall. Second, canals that discharge to the lake are discharging invasive plants (hyacinth). They collect and mat up with beneficial plants such as bulrush, and when sprayed, non-target species are killed. Managers of canals not doing jobs by controlling the hyacinth. Third, USACE is closing the Franklin and Moorehaven locks for maintenance just when the lake is recovering and business is starting to improve. Shutting down for 3 months will be a stab in the heart for business owners.
- Chair: Is the maintenance to be staged? Answer: No.
- Martin County had similar problem and talked USACE into doing both jobs at same time.

- Comment that it's a violation of state law to use public funds to treat private waters (canals).
- Need comprehensive presentation on Ten Mile Creek.
- Mid-February Bird Count – more black skimmers spotted at Pahokee docks than anywhere in the USA.
- Big O Bird Fest will be staged from Clewiston, April 3-5. Web site is: www.bigobirdfestival.com
- FWCC will do first of the season largemouth bass stocking on 3/26/09
- Lee County Commission has enacted an urban turf fertilizer ordinance with seasonal restrictions on phosphorous and nitrogen (0% at specified times).
- Chair: Is this more stringent than the statewide legislation? Lee County: Don't really know because it is seasonal; however it addresses nitrogen and the state legislation does not.
- Comment that SFWMD has been conducting Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) pumping tests. Early results look positive.
- Comment that the March 31/April 1 River of Grass Workshops conflict with the Kissimmee Reservation Technical Information Workshops. Makes it very difficult to attend both.

Item 3: Water Conditions Update: Matahel Ansar, Operations and Control Dept., SFWMD, provided an update on water conditions in the District.

Discussion:

- Question about volume of Evapotranspiration (ET) losses vs. volume of discharges.
- SFWMD: Adaptive protocols document used as decision making starting point. Notified Governing Board District was about to reach the water restriction line. Decision included all scientists – including our estuarine scientists, but final recommendation made by District's Chief Environmental Scientist based on needs of the system, experience over the past two years, and the current rare situation where we have concomitant drought on both coasts and in the Lake region. Concerned about how to provide backup water supply for the Lower East Coast. Hope to decide by end of the week. USACE: The Colonel understands urgency and need to act quickly.
- Chair: Pulse release is about 650 cfs; question is would Caloosahatchee benefit from smaller release? SFWMD: Staff scientists discussing that question, however moving water requires a gradient and that could be difficult given ET losses.
- USACE: No decision yet because Colonel Grosskruger wants to meet with Lee County and other stakeholders to review all relevant information.
- **Comment that water rationing may be just around the corner and only one area being asked to help (Caloosahatchee). Everyone should share the adversity. Under previous Lake O schedule (“WSE” Regulation Schedule) would have been into restrictions six months ago.**

- **Chair:** Noted in Meeting Summary and will report concern to WRAC and Governing Board.

Item 4: Lake Ecology Update: Dave Unsell, Dir., Lake Okeechobee Division, provided the status of Lake Okeechobee health and water quality technologies. Charles Hanlon provided an update about the Lake Okeechobee Burn Plan.

Discussion:

Item 5: Northern Everglades Plan and River Watershed Protection Plan

Updates: Pinar Balci, Lead Technical Program Specialist, Everglades Restoration updated the Committee on these issues.

Discussion items included:

- Martin County Commission: Indian River Lagoon, South Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan includes removal of 8.2 million cubic yards of muck from the Indian River Lagoon.
- Comment that IRL, South CERP project has been in place but has not been funded. Many problems now being discussed should have begun to be resolved with the IRL, South projects. Now there is great uncertainty. SFWMD: Some funding has been requested through the Economic Stimulus Plan.
- Chair: Good to see the project updates. As the SFWMD Governing Board discusses the revised Strategic Plan, this information will be important. An example is storing more water on public lands such as Allapattah and on private.
- Lee County: Algal turf scrubber is removing algae from Caloosahatchee river water. Vandalism problems solved.
- Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs): Florida DEP should have the St. Lucie TMDL in the administrative record within two weeks. By June, the Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) planning process should begin.
- Northern Everglades Plan is right approach and reaffirms the need for the CERP IRL, South plan. The St. Lucie River Watershed Protection Plan will help resolve problems on the east coast. Martin County is still working to acquire land.

Item 6: Water Quality Treatment Technologies (and Lake Ecology) Update:

Dave Unsell, Dir., Lake Okeechobee Div., SFWMD, provided an update to the Committee.

Discussion included:

- Chair: Re: Algal Turf Scrubber – pilot project at S-154. SFWMD: Worked well at this area; however questions remain about scale – at five to ten acres, not seeing good results. On Caloosahatchee, nitrogen is the target nutrient so it is working better.
- New Lemkin Creek Hybrid Water Treatment Tech project: Initial size of pond is 10 acres, polishing pond is 24 acres. Overall have small footprint because of need to pump water through area.

- Dairy Best Management Practices: Retention and reuse are the important factors. Dairies glad to have these in place – helps provide backup water source.
- Tilling/Disking Demonstration: working very well. Early results are showing phosphorous is being sequestered. More monitoring is being done.
- Seeing any increase in enrollments in the Wetlands Reserve Program? SFWMD: Expect good results similar to Buck Island; SFWMD doing outreach.
- Downside to use of alum e.g. need to scrape down lake bottom in future? SFWMD: So far testing at small scale – don't intent to use in Lake Okeechobee. At some point, may need to do something with the material. It is a mechanical, expensive process that would be very difficult to do at scale of Lake and Everglades restoration.
- Not using this technique in Martin County for stormwater retrofits – if scrape down is needed in future, would also remove beneficial submerged aquatic vegetation.
- Also have aluminum radicals floating around and mercury is a problem.
- Legacy phosphorous still a huge problem. Buck Island Ranch stopped fertilizing many years ago and P levels are still 300 parts per billion +. Will likely have very high levels of P going to lake for years so the U.S. Sugar acquisition is important. Also need to consider how much treatment and storage is needed north of the lake; and it's important to look at better lake level management.

Item 7: Controlled Burning Plan for Lake Okeechobee: Chuck Hanlon, Lake Okeechobee Div., provided this update for the Committee:

Discussion included:

- SFWMD: By this summer should have burn management plan continued; intent is to do more frequent, smaller burns and avoid large, damaging fires.
- Plan does not include southeast and southern portion of lake – Pelican Bay to Moonshine Bay and Ritta Island, etc. What is possibility of including those areas?
- SFWMD: Planning group aware of need; concern is soils have high peat content causing long smoldering fires that reignite and wind patterns not favorable.
- Need to try to figure out a way to do controlled burns in that area – better to reduce the fuel loads, have professionals do the burning vs. arsonists.
- Impacts fishing and tourism.
- Need Division of Forestry to buy into the planning process.
- Need controlled burn plan with manageable burn units that can be burned in one day in accordance with Div. of Forestry burn permits.
- On south end, get all the detritus and floating vegetation – creating a giant trash heap – need to do controlled burning on south end.

- The Nature Conservancy has helped the planning effort by providing sample plans.

Item 9 (taken up before Item 8): Martin County Stormwater and other Restoration Projects: Paul Millar, Water Resources Manager, Martin County:
Discussion included:

- Program funding: benefit treatment units; Martin County does not have a stormwater utility with taxing authority. Currently discussing a stormwater utility ordinance.
- Any residential reuse? None other than on Jupiter Island.

Item 8: Dispersed Storage and Treatment Update: Benita Whale, Dep. Director, Regulation Department, Water Resources, SFWMD, provided this update.

Discussion included:

- SFWMD: Indiantown Citrus Growers Association absorbed 3,550 acre feet during high rainfall period and they can use that water for irrigation. It is not counted against their allocation under the Consumptive Use Permit.
- Question about how SFWMD calculates amount to be stored. SFWMD: evaluating appropriate timing and distribution and amount that can be stored.
- Question about whether U.S. Farm Bill provision regarding regional and local governments being ineligible can be reversed? SFWMD: in some programs governments were not excluded; need to make sure evaluation of benefits compares like data.
- Need to implement dispersed storage more quickly in the upper basins because it can be implemented and show results more quickly than the CERP process.
- Looking at quick start up in Fisheating Creek basin.
- ET losses – how does SFWMD calculate amount of storage to be paid for? Using rule of thumb but working to improve calculations.
- When water is released downstream what are water quality impacts? SFWMD: Have both retention and detention areas and we're encouraging landowners to continue to implement BMPs. Not seeing spikes in P levels; still monitoring.
- Lykes Bros. West Water Pool monitoring showed a 50% reduction in concentration and removal of 3.3 tonnes. Did not see a "first flush" which was surprising.
- Chair: Landowners asking about future of these programs given budget cuts, etc. From data on these programs it appears they are successful and we should support less-than-fee programs that can achieve cost-effective results.
- SFWMD: Discussing with DEP questions about how and who is responsible for meeting the TMDLs once they are in place.
- Under new Farm Bill, there are new opportunities for partnering: Wetlands Reserve Enhancement and Reserve Rights Pilot programs. In Fisheating

Creek basin, have 15-20 landowners representing 20,000 acres and in Kissimmee River sub-basin, have another 6 landowners representing another 20,000 acres that are pre-enrolled and ready to go. Allows retention of grazing rights which makes the program better for landowners. Will come through as a Request for Proposals. Could create new partnership opportunities for natural restoration approach with SFWMD programs.

- Committee unanimously supported cost-effective, dispersed water storage programs of this nature, within funding limits.

Comments:

- USACE Representative said the upcoming phone conference is the normally scheduled, 2 p.m. Thursday conference on Lake Okeechobee releases.
- Franklin Lock work now scheduled for May 26 – July 1, but trying to delay until after July 4. Purpose – install manatee protection system.
- Moorehaven Lock work scheduled for June 1 – September 3 for major maintenance.
- USACE evaluating fixes for Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough project. No solutions yet.

Next Meeting:

- June 24, 2009, West Palm Beach

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

**Supporting documents for the following item have been added:
Item #:7**

See supporting document: [EWright's FB Presentation\(final\).pdf](#)



Farm Bill 2008

Conservation Programs in Florida

April 2, 2009

Edward Wright
Partnership Liaison
Edward.Wright@fl.usda.gov
(561) 248-3540



Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)



EQIP Authorized Funding Levels

- ☐ \$1,200,000,000 for fiscal year 2008;
- ☐ \$1,337,000,000 for fiscal year 2009;
- ☐ \$1,450,000,000 for fiscal year 2010;
- ☐ \$1,588,000,000 for fiscal year 2011;
- ☐ and \$1,750,000,000 in fiscal year 2012.



EQIP Statutory Changes

- Payment limitation are reduced from \$450,000 to \$300,000 for the length of the Farm Bill.
- Payments received for technical assistance shall not be included in this limitation.



EQIP Statutory Changes

- ❑ Opportunities for additional conservation assistance to organic producers agreeing to develop and carry out organic system plans.
- ❑ Payments for organic production may not exceed in aggregate \$20,000 per year or \$80,000 during the life of the farm bill for installing conservation practices.



EQIP Statutory Changes

- ❑ Forest management and conservation practices related to organic production have been given stronger emphasis
- ❑ Conservation activities now authorize the development of comprehensive nutrient management plans and other plans as determined by the Secretary
 - Note: This authorizes use of EQIP financial assistance dollars for those planning activities as deemed appropriate by the Chief.



EOIP Statutory Changes

- Eligibility for increased payments is expanded to include socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in addition to previously authorized beginning and limited resource farmers and ranchers.
- Allows for these producers to receive advance payment up to 30 percent for the purposes of purchasing materials and services



Florida EOIP Funding Accounts

CIG, State Component	\$150,000.00
Beginning Farmer or Rancher	\$391,607.00
Indian Tribal	\$300,000.00
Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher	\$391,607.00
Organic	\$500,000.00
Partnership	\$949,929.00



Florida EQIP Funding Accounts, cont'd..

Planning	\$500,000.00
Socially Disadvantaged	\$501,000.00
Northern Everglades Restoration Area	\$2,200,000.00
Confined Livestock Operations	\$1,500,00.00



Florida EQIP Funding Accounts, cont'd..

Springshed Protection	\$700,000.00
Administrative Area 1	\$1,450,000.00
Administrative Area 2	\$1,450,000.00
Administrative Area 3	\$1,450,000.00
Administrative Area 4	\$1,450,000.00
Suwannee	\$700,000.00
Forestry	\$750,000.00



Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

- The fiscal year 2009 Announcement for Program Funding (APF) for CIG was published in www.grants.gov on Friday, January 16, 2009
- The application deadline has been extended to March 20, 2009



Agriculture Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)

- AWEP Notice of Request for Proposals (RFP) published in the Federal Register on January 14, 2009
- Proposals submitted to the Chief must be postmarked by April 1, 2009



AWEP Statutory Purpose

- Promote ground and surface water conservation and improve water quality on agricultural lands by:
 - Entering into partnership agreements with partners on a regional level to benefit working agricultural land.
 - Entering into contracts with, and making payments to, producers to carry out agricultural water enhancement activities; or



AWEP Authorized Funding

Levels:

- ❑ \$73,000,000 for fiscal year 2009;
- ❑ \$73,000,000 for fiscal year 2010;
- ❑ \$74,000,000 for fiscal year 2011;
- ❑ and \$60,000,000 in fiscal year 2012



Key Points

- Producer Applications & Contracts
 - Applications for AWEP funds will be available at local USDA service center.
 - To receive assistance through AWEP, producers must meet EQIP eligibility requirements, are subject to EQIP payment limitations, and other program policy requirements.



Key Points

- Entity Eligibility for partnership agreements
 - Eligible entities include:
 - Federally recognized Indian Tribes,
 - States,
 - Units of local government,
 - Agricultural or silvicultural associations (or other groups of such producers), or
 - Other nongovernmental organizations that have experience working with agricultural producers.



Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI)

- Request for Proposals that will promote the development and demonstration of innovative conservation practices, and
- delivery methods, such as for specialty crop and organic production and precision agriculture producers
- Opportunity to leverage non federal funds



Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)



WHIP Statutory Changes

- Authorized funding level to the maximum extent practicable is \$85,000,000 each of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.
(Florida currently has \$741,000 available in financial assistance funds for FY 2009)



WHIP Statutory Changes

- Places an Increased Emphasis on Initiatives: The Secretary has discretionary authority to give priority to projects that would address issues raised by State, regional, and national conservation initiatives.
- Creates an annual payment limitation: Payments made to a person or legal entity, directly or indirectly, under the program may not exceed, in the aggregate, \$50,000 per year. **(Florida will limit contract amounts to \$35,000.)**



WHIP Significant Rule Changes

Eligible Land:

- Private agricultural land
- Nonindustrial private forest land
- Indian land

Ineligible land:

Publicly owned land (Federal, State, County, or local government)



Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)



Program Purpose

Assists landowners and operators in protecting grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring and conserving grassland resources



Enrollment Options

- Permanent easements
- 10, 15, and 20 year rental contracts
- Restoration agreements
- Cooperative agreements with eligible partners/entities



GRP Changes

- Restoration cost share rate limited to 50%; maximum annual payment is \$50,000
- 60% of funds for easements
- 40% of funds for rental contracts
- There is no minimum acreage requirement



Easement Compensation

- Can not be more than the FMV of the land, minus the grazing value
- For rental contracts, no more than 75% of the grazing value will be paid
- Annual payment limitation of \$50,000 for rental contracts



Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP)



Program Purpose

To protect agricultural use and related conservation values of eligible land by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land.



Eligible Lands

Privately owned land on a farm or ranch that contains one of the following:

- Prime, unique, or statewide or locally important soil
- Historical or archaeological resources



Eligible Lands

- Include cropland, rangeland, grassland, pasture land, and forestland which cannot exceed two-thirds of the easement acreage.



Application Procedure

- ❑ Eligible entities submit FRPP proposals to the State Conservationist throughout the year
- ❑ Ranking of applications will be announced by the State Conservationist 60 days before the ranking date. (Ranking Date June 1, 2009)



Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)



Program Purpose

- Purchase conservation easements (permanent or 30-year)
- Enter into 30-year contracts (only on tribal lands)
- Or, restoration cost share agreements with eligible landowners who voluntarily cooperate to restore, protect, or enhance wetlands



Landowner Eligibility

- Private landowners and Tribes are eligible to participate
- Government entities are not eligible
- Land must have been owned for 7 years



Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP)

The purpose of WREP is to target and leverage resources to address high priority wetlands protection, restoration, and enhancement objectives.



WREP

Agreements for WREP can be with States (including a political subdivision or agency of a State) nongovernmental organizations, and Indian Tribes.



WREP

- Funding for WREP agreements will be announced in the Federal Register
- The announcement will provide details on the priorities for funding, ranking criteria, level of funding, etc
- The NRCS Chief will determine the funding level for WREP on an annual basis



WREP

Reserved Rights Pilot:
Under the reserved rights pilot, a landowner may reserve grazing rights in the warranty easement deed or 30-year contract, if the State Conservationist determines that the reservation and use of the grazing rights